

American Film Festival in Wroclaw – Welcoming Remarks
Ambassador Stephen D. Mull
October 21, 2014

Thank you, Mayor Dutkiewicz. It's wonderful to return to Wroclaw for the fifth annual American Film Festival. The U.S. Mission is proud to support this Festival and to see it flourish in this vibrant city, which has been selected as a European Capital of Culture for 2016. This celebration of American film could not take place without the generous support of its sponsors, media partners, and volunteers.

I would like to congratulate founder and Festival Director Roman Gutek for his vision and dedication. Congratulations are also in order for Creative Director Ula Śniegowska whose outstanding selection of both contemporary and classic films has been delighting Festival audiences since 2010. It's a privilege to work with such talented and devoted partners.

The Festival is known for a rich variety of American films that otherwise would not be screened in Polish cinemas. This year's edition is no exception. It features 70 films, including 54 Polish premieres. There is something for everyone, from the latest in contemporary American film, to cutting-edge documentaries, to classics of American film history.

The 2014 American Film Festival in Wroclaw will feature four movies created by Academy Award nominated American writer-director Whit Stillman, including his critically acclaimed trilogy *Metropolitan*, *Barcelona*, and *The Last Days of Disco*. Mr. Stillman's work has served as a catalyst for discussions on the role of class structure in American society.

This year's retrospective will showcase the films of the Oscar Award winning screenwriter and director Orson Welles, an American icon whose trailblazing work has shaped the art of film making. In his own words: "A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet." We hope you will enjoy the "poetry" of *Citizen Kane* and some of his other classics featured in this week's festival.

In addition to its wide selection of films, this beautifully designed festival also offers a series of seminars, lectures, and discussions to illuminate the thought provoking issues explored in the movies to be screened this week.

Thank you for coming to the American Film Festival. It is my hope that the films we view leave us changed and challenged, enlightening our shared world view, because the beauty of the cinema knows no frontiers.